

joined the Armed Forces and made their promise to serve their country. We will begin to meet the long-term care needs of our aging veterans. We will begin to lower the waiting times for our medical appointments that veterans have to endure now.

Mr. Speaker, after years of flat line budgets, this action is sorely needed. I salute this move taken by the Vice President this morning.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

#### HARD TIMES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday I spoke on this House floor about the crisis facing farmers and ranchers. This evening, I continue my efforts to inform my colleagues about the seriousness of the issues and the need to act now.

Last week, I introduced with some of my colleagues legislation that takes an important step to help producers make it through this period of extremely low prices. I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 2568, the Market Loss Assistance Act of 1999. This straightforward bill provides producers an immediate shot in the arm. Under this bill, producers would receive an additional payment equal to 75 percent of their current farm payment. While this is only one part of a solution to help producers, it is an important part, and it provides immediate assistance. We need to assure our farmers that relief is on its way. Let us begin the debate on disaster assistance now.

Part of the problem is the loss of exports. In 1996, agricultural exports hit a record of \$59.9 billion, and since then, agricultural exports have fallen substantially. This year, exports are predicted to be \$49 billion for a loss of over 18 percent since 1996, just 3 years ago.

Not surprisingly, as exports have fallen, so has net farm income. Since 1996, net farm income has fallen to \$45 billion, a decline of 15 percent. That \$45 billion net farm income now stands at the same level as a decade ago. Does anyone think the cost of fertilizer, land payments, equipment, and other farm inputs have remained the same price for the last decade? Of course not.

In the world of agricultural export promotion we have lost the battle on behalf of farmers, and if the current trend continues, we may soon lose the war.

This chart paints a very clear picture on where the United States is on its commitment to helping American farmers and ranchers compete around the world. About \$8.45 billion is spent

each year on agricultural subsidies. Of this, the United States represents \$122 million or roughly only 1.4 percent.

We repeatedly tell our farmers and ranchers to produce for the world and compete for world markets. When your principle export competitor is the European community, the battle for market share under these conditions does not take long. In 1996, the EU spent 69 times more than we spent for export assistance. We cannot let this go on.

Out of this pie, 83.5 percent of the export assistance programs are spent by the European community. Ours are 2.5 percent.

When I first arrived in Congress, the Department of Agriculture indicated that we could not use export promotion funding because prices were too high and that shipping our U.S. farm products overseas might make them even more expensive. Now I am told we cannot use export funds because it would drive the prices even lower; a story I find particularly hard to believe in light of tight storage situation and low farm prices already well under the loan rate.

If the bitter medicine of low prices must be taken, I would recommend we aggressively work through this period and move U.S. agricultural products. Our farmers are locked in a battle competing for international markets. We cannot continue to abandon them. We must use our export programs forcefully, and we must act now.

Mr. Speaker, farmers are willing to compete in the global marketplace, but they cannot compete with foreign treasuries. I urge all my colleagues to join in the fight for the American farmer. We need short term disaster assistance; and for the long run, we need agricultural exports.

#### PROTECT OUR GREAT LAKES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, last October you and our colleagues gave unanimous consent to my House Resolution which called on the President and the other Body to act to prevent the sale or diversion of Great Lakes water to foreign countries, businesses, corporations, and individuals. The House of Representatives, speaking with one voice, asked that procedures be established to guarantee that any sale or diversion be fully negotiated and approved by representatives of the United States Government and the Government of Canada in consultation with effective States and provinces.

I want to remind our colleagues of that House action, Mr. Speaker, because there is another threat to the Great Lakes, one posed by drilling for gas and oil in and under the waters of this great natural resource.

Mr. Speaker, we are not being alarmists. Water diversion and drilling for gas and oil are real threats to one of the world's most valuable resources.

Consider, Mr. Speaker, these facts. As I list each item, I want you to think about each of these facts in terms of potential impact on our Great Lakes.

Seventy percent of the Earth's surface is covered by water; 97.5 percent of that water is sea water. Only 2.5 percent of the surface water is fresh water. The Great Lakes contains 6 quadrillion gallons of fresh water, one-fifth of the Earth's fresh water resources.

The Great Lakes are home to 40 million people. One-quarter of Canada's population lives in the Great Lakes basin.

The World Bank predicts that by about the year 2025 more than 3 billion people in 52 countries will suffer water shortages for drinking or sanitation. More than 300 cities in China are currently experiencing water shortages, and more than 100 are deemed to be in condition of acute water scarcity. The global demand for water is doubling every 21 years.

Citizens of the United States and Canada use and consume more than 100 gallons per day per person. Eighty percent of the fresh water used goes to agricultural production.

I thank the Buffalo News for many of those facts, Mr. Speaker. I present them as random facts because like pieces of a puzzle they must be analyzed and arranged to see their importance.

The World Bank has studied this puzzle, and I call your attention to a quote from a World Bank report which appeared in the Buffalo News in a March 1999 story. The World Bank report predicted wars of the next century will be fought over fresh water.

So are we really being alarmists? I believe not.

A company in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, just one company, was given a permit last year to take up the 2.6 million gallons of water per day for 5 years from Lake Superior. I was joined by members of the Ontario parliament and the Canadian New Democratic Party in bringing public attention to this permit which was revoked by the Ontario government, but all fresh water will increasingly be eyed as a potential commodity.

A Vancouver-based company, Global Water Corporation, has an agreement with an Alaskan community of Sitka to take fresh water from a lake and ship it by tanker to China. The deal allows Global to take up to 5 billion gallons a year for 30 years. Global envisions 445 tankers per year carrying fresh water to Asia.

Now we have spoken of just two companies. We know the market is there. We can easily see the overhead is minimal, the market is expanding and the potential number of speculators and potential shippers is unlimited.

Let me say at this time, Mr. Speaker, that although I have mentioned China twice in my remarks, I am not attempting to invoke it as threat to our own security. China is merely a customer in need of fresh water now. The